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pleurocentrum, the vertebral body becomes a hypocentrum. If now the pleurocentrum should grow at the expense of all the other elements, we would have such a vertebra as Cope and others find in the Amniota. And considering what we find in the temnospondylous Stegocephali, in the Clepsydropsidæ, and in Sphenodon, I cannot refuse to believe that such a course of development has been pursued.

It appears to me unnecessary to suppose that the embolomerous condition has at any time resulted from the rhachitomous. In some cases probably the latter has grown out of the former; but it is by no means a necessary course. Probably in most cases the lower intercalated cartilages have suffered reduction before coösfication has united them with the upper intercalated pieces.

THE SEVENTH SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL GEOLOGICAL CONGRESS.

This will probably eclipse any previous session in many respects and will enjoy the distinction hitherto conceded to the second, or that of Bologna, of being the most notable course of geologists, and of making the most important contribution to geological knowledge, both practical and theoretical, in the history of this Congress. Many circumstances conspire to produce this result. In the first place Russians share with Americans the reputation of being lavish in expenditure and prodigal in hospitality; it may be added of both nations also, that this extravagance is not diminished because it furthers some important project.

When at the London session of 1888, it was decided to hold the fifth session of the Congress in Philadelphia in 1891, the geological world was prepared to be astounded at the profusion of the hospitality and the generosity exhibited in the general management and especially in the long excursions. That the bacillus of Officialism infected this egg before it was laid in the wrong nest, and broke hope's promise as to its hatching, only

has increased the zeal of the Russians to outdo their most dangerous rivals.

The next Congress was that of 1894 in Zürich, Switzerland, where there were rocks of the world's crust enough, but those of commercial value were not superabundant. While Switzerland did herself credit, therefore, nothing was done which deprived the Bologna Congress (1881) of the right to be considered the most successful and brilliant thus far held. The Russians thereupon secured the favor of the Tsar and of his Ministers and called to their aid all the official and other geologists of the Empire.

The large cities and towns, the wealthy syndicates and proprietors, all united in the efforts to draw to Russia the largest possible number of scientific men, and to conduct them over the maximum of Russian territory in order that the resources of that enormous realm (or rather of its European part) might become known as they never have been known before.

By imperial decree the Consuls in all foreign countries have been notified to facilitate to the utmost degree the viséing of passports upon presentation of the card of membership of the Congress. This same card entitles the owner to gratuitous transportation over the entire system of Russian railways. It will also enable the possessor to pass his baggage and effects through the frontier, with the minimum amount of embarrassment from Custom House regulations. Finally objects marked for the Geological Congress may be sent without being opened at the frontier to St. Petersburg, and there opened in the presence of an officer of the Congress. The business to be transacted at the meeting of the Congress will be referred to hereafter. Equally important are the opportunities for the masters of the branch of science to meet each other and discuss face to face the problems which hitherto have been debated at long range and through the desultory and uncertain medium of scientific journals or *comptes rendus* in different languages, the illustrations and nomenclature of each party to the controversy being drawn from his own land.

But most instructive of all the customs has grown that of bringing the students from other lands face to face with the most

striking geological phenomena of the country where the Congress is held. To do this excursions are arranged and conducted by the best geologists of the nation acting as host and the foreign members are furnished with a "livret guide" or pamphlet containing maps, sections and a digest of the literature bearing upon the regions to be examined. This was done in Switzerland and the little book is one of the most valuable of the souvenirs of the Congress.

These Congresses have grown out of a resolution presented by the late Dr. T. Sterry Hunt in a meeting of the A. A. A. S. in Buffalo in 1876 to the following effect: "*Resolved*, That a Committee of the Association be appointed to consider the propriety of holding an International Congress of Geologists at Paris during the International Exhibition of 1878, for the purpose of getting together comparative collections, maps and sections, and for the settling of many obscure points relating to geological classification and nomenclature." The above Committee instead of "reporting on the advisability," etc., went to work, and with the assistance of numerous foreign members actually organized a central bureau in Paris, where the first Congress was held in 1878. After laying down the plan for future work, this Congress fixed the dues of membership at 12 francs, and created two Committees; one for the unification of the conventional geological symbols, and one for the unification of the nomenclature.

The next Congress was held in Bologna in 1881, and thanks to Prof. (now Senator) Capellini and his influence with the Italian Government, the most important progress up to the present time was made, and the proceedings were perpetuated in a volume which is a monument of good taste in typography and illustrations, and of scientific research in its contents. It decided to produce under the direction of the Congress a geological map of Europe, confiding its execution to Profs. Beyrich and Hauchecorne of Berlin.

The third Congress was held in Berlin in 1885, the year 1884 which would have been the next date for the Triennial

¹ About the same time and entirely independently, Prof. Giovanni Capillini made an almost identical proposition to certain influential geological friends.

Congress, having been allowed to pass without one wing to the fear of the cholera which had invaded Southern France.

The fourth Congress was held in London in 1888, the fifth in Washington in 1891, and the sixth in Zürich, Switzerland, in 1894.

At the latter a special committee was appointed to select the topics which should occupy the attention of the members of the Congress. These topics have not yet been announced, but the reports of the committees on the unification of nomenclature, that of the committee on the production of a geological map of Europe (of which several parts have been issued since the Zürich Congress), and the special committees appointed by the last Congress; one under Prince Roland Bonaparte, on glacial phenomena, another under Prof. Michel Levy on petrography, and a third under Emm. de Margerie on bibliography (which has issued a valuable volume) will furnish plenty of material to occupy the five days of the meeting from the 28th of August to the 4th of September.

Preceding the session three contemporaneous excursions will be made. One of about 350 miles from St. Petersburg into Finland, one a little shorter into Esthonia, and a long excursion of 2300 miles lasting twenty-eight days over a most interesting part of the Ural Mountains on the borders of Asia as far as Ekaterineburg on the sixtieth degree of east longitude (east of the entire continent of Africa and about on the meridian of Mauritius).

After the Congress another choice of excursions will be made from Moscow SE., S., or SW. through Southern Russia in Europe to Wladikavkaz, where the three parties reunited will pass over the military road crossing the great Caucasus, and after visiting Baku, Batoum and other places, and traversing the Black Sea to Kertch and Yalta dismiss at Sebastopol on October 5th. The longest of these attractive excursions will not be less than 2700 miles.

Such a stupendous scale of entertaining visiting geologists is without precedent, and if the war clouds of the Levant but disperse, a long stride will have been gained by western savants in an understanding of the geological enigmas of European Russia.

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